

# New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standard for World Languages

## INTRODUCTION

### World Languages Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

New Jersey citizens are part of a dynamic, interconnected, and technologically driven global society centered on the creation and communication of knowledge and ideas *across geographical, cultural, and linguistic borders*. Individuals who effectively communicate in more than one language, with an appropriate understanding of cultural contexts, are *globally literate* and possess the attributes reflected in the mission and vision for world languages education that follow:

**Mission:** *The study of another language and culture enables individuals, whether functioning as citizens or workers, to communicate face-to-face and by virtual means in appropriate ways with people from diverse cultures.*

**Vision:** An education in world languages fosters a population that:

- Communicates in more than one language with the levels of language proficiency that are required to function in a variety of occupations and careers in the contemporary workplace.
- Exhibits attitudes, values, and skills that indicate a positive disposition and understanding of cultural differences and that enhance cross-cultural communication.
- Values language learning as a global literacy as well as for its long-term worth in fostering personal, work-related, and/or financial success in our increasingly interconnected world.

### Intent and Spirit of the World Languages Standard

The study of world languages is spiraling and recursive and aligned to appropriate proficiency targets that ultimately enable the attainment of proficiency at the Novice-High level or above, which is a requirement for high school graduation. All students have regular, sequential instruction in one or more world languages beginning in preschool or kindergarten and continuing at least through the freshman year of high school. Further, N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(b)4 directs districts to actively encourage all students who otherwise meet the current-year requirements for high school graduation to accrue, during each year of enrollment, five credits in world languages aimed at preparation for entrance into postsecondary programs or 21st-century careers. Opportunities to develop higher levels of proficiency should be based on personal and career interests and should be encouraged in Personalized Student Learning Plans.

The number of years spent studying a language and the frequency of instruction impact the level of proficiency acquired in the language. This principle has historically been supported by research in the United States and abroad. However, as part of a three-year grant project (2005-08), the New Jersey Department of Education collected [data](#) from New Jersey schools that further support these research findings. Data from the federally funded project that assessed the language proficiency of 60,000 8th-grade students present compelling evidence for the need to develop programs that offer *all* students the opportunity to meet the state-designated proficiency level of Novice-High. The data show that programs offering *a minimum of 540 hours of articulated instruction in classes that meet at least three times a week throughout the academic year* produce a majority of students who can speak at the Novice-High

proficiency level or higher. Consequently, the establishment and/or maintenance of quality, well articulated language programs at the elementary and middle-school levels, as required by [New Jersey Administrative Code](#), is critical for building the capacity of high school students to achieve the Novice-High level of language proficiency required for graduation.

## Language Proficiency Levels

Unlike other New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards areas, the world languages standard is benchmarked by proficiency levels, rather than grade levels. The development of these proficiency levels was informed by the *American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners* (ACTFL, 1998), the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines—Speaking* (ACTFL, 1999), and the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines—Writing* (ACTFL, 2001). The levels are fully defined in the [World Languages Performance Level Descriptors Table](#) and are summarily reflected in the following proficiency statements:

- **Novice-Mid Level:** Students communicate *using memorized words and phrases* to talk about familiar topics related to school, home, and the community.
- **Novice-High Level:** Students communicate *using words, lists, and simple sentences* to ask and answer questions, to handle simple transactions related to everyday life, and to talk about subject matter studied in other classes.
- **Intermediate-Low Level:** Students communicate *using simple sentences* to ask and answer questions, to handle simple transactions related to everyday life, and to talk about subject matter studied in other classes.
- **Intermediate-Mid Level:** Students communicate *using strings of sentences* to ask and answer questions, to handle simple transactions related to everyday life, and to talk about subject matter studied in other classes.
- **Intermediate-High Level:** Students communicate *using connected sentences and paragraphs* to handle complicated situations on a wide-range of topics.
- **Advanced-Low Level:** Students communicate *using paragraph-level discourse* to handle complicated situations on a wide-range of topics.

## Realistic Grade-Level Targets for Benchmarked Proficiency Levels

Language learners can be expected to move through levels of proficiency at different rates. In addition, language learners may demonstrate differing proficiencies depending upon the communicative mode in which they are functioning ([interpersonal](#), [interpretive](#), or [presentational](#)). However, according to ACTFL, the proficiency levels generally align with grade-level achievement as follows:

- **Novice-Mid Level:** Students beginning the study of a second language in preschool or kindergarten in a program that meets a minimum of three times a week for 30 minutes should meet the cumulative progress indicators for the Novice-Mid level *by the end of grade 2*.
- **Novice-High Level:** Students beginning the study of a second language in preschool or kindergarten in a program that meets a minimum of three times a week for 30 minutes, and continuing the study of that language in subsequent grades in a program that meets for the same amount of time, should meet the cumulative progress indicators for the Novice-High level *by the end of grade 5*.

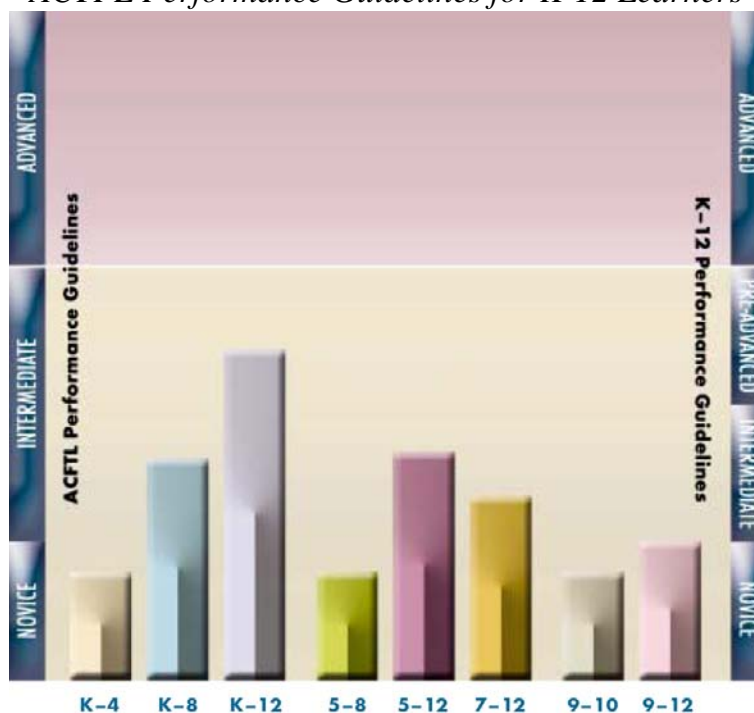
- **Intermediate-Low Level:** Students beginning the study of a second language in a program that meets a minimum of three times a week for 30 minutes during elementary school, and continuing the study of that language through middle school in a program that meets a minimum of five times a week for 40 minutes, should meet the cumulative progress indicators for the Intermediate-Low level *by the end of grade 8*.
- **Intermediate-Mid Level:** Students beginning the study of a second language in a program that meets a minimum of three times a week for 30 minutes during elementary school and a minimum of five times a week for 40 minutes during middle school and high school, should meet the cumulative progress indicators for the Intermediate-Mid level *by the end of grade 10*.
- **Intermediate-High Level:** Students beginning the study of a second language in a program that meets a minimum of three times a week for 30 minutes during elementary school and a minimum of five times a week for 40 minutes during middle school and high school, should meet the cumulative progress indicators for the Intermediate-High level *by the end of grade 12*.
- **Advanced-Low Level:** Heritage students and students who have significant experiences with the language outside of the classroom should meet the cumulative progress indicators for the Advanced-Low level *by the end of grade 12*.

**A Note About Preschool Learners:** Like other young learners, preschool students learn world languages with the goal of reaching the Novice-Mid level by second grade. However, the focus of language learning for preschool students may differ from the focus of language learning for students in grades K-2. To learn more about language learning at the preschool level, see the [Preschool Teaching & Learning Standards](#).

### **ACTFL Anticipated Performance Outcomes**

The graphic that follows provides a visual representation of anticipated student performance outcomes (ACTFL, 1998).

Visual Representation of Anticipated Performance Outcomes as described in the  
*ACTFL Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners*



## Philosophy and Goals

The New Jersey world languages standard and indicators reflect the philosophy and goals found in the national *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2006). They were developed by consulting standards in the United States and internationally, as well as by examining the latest research and best practices on second-language acquisition. The revised world languages standard is generic in nature, designed as a core subject, and is meant to be inclusive for all languages taught in New Jersey schools. With regard to the implementation of the world languages standard for particular languages or language groups:

- **American Sign Language (ASL):** Students and teachers of American Sign Language (ASL) communicate thoughts and ideas through three-dimensional visual communication. They engage in all three modes of communication—interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational—by using combinations of hand-shapes, palm orientations, and movements of the hands, arms, and body. ASL differs from other spoken languages in that the vocal cords are not used for communication.
- **Classical languages:** The study of classical languages focuses primarily on the interpretive mode using historical contexts. Occasionally, some attention may be given to oral dimensions of classical languages, such as by asking students to make presentations in the language of study as a way of strengthening their language knowledge and use.
- **Heritage-languages:** Heritage-language students may be (1) newly-arrived immigrants to the United States, (2) first-generation students whose home language is not English and who have been schooled primarily in the United States, or (3) second- or third- generation students who have learned some aspects of a heritage language at home. These students have varying abilities and proficiencies in their respective heritage languages; they often carry on fluent and idiomatic conversations (interpersonal mode), but require instruction that allows them to develop strengths in reading (interpretive mode) and in formal speaking and writing (presentational mode). These students are held to the same standards for world languages as their English-speaking peers, and they should be provided with opportunities for developing skills in their native languages that are both developmentally supportive and rigorous. Designing curriculum to maintain and further develop native-language skills ensures that the skills of these students do not erode over time as English becomes their dominant language.

## Revised Standard

The world languages standard lays the foundation for creating local curricula and related assessments. Changes that led to the revised 2009 standard are as follows:

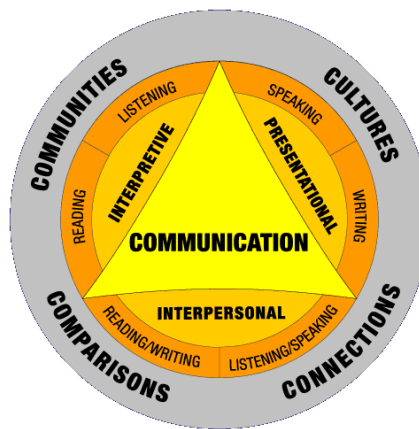
- The communication and culture standards have been combined into one standard that continues to be organized by proficiency levels, but now also encompasses a broader spectrum of proficiency levels.
- World languages content is both linguistic and cultural, and includes personal and social topics and concepts as well as ideas from other content areas. Both linguistic and cultural content statements have been added for each strand to provide a context for the cumulative progress indicators (CPIs) at each proficiency level.
- Linguistic content varies and is dependent on the mode of language use. Proficiency does not occur at the same rate for all students in all skill areas. (See the results of the Foreign Language Assistance Program Grant Project, which are contained in the report, [Policy, Assessment, and Professional](#)

[Development: Results from a Statewide Study.](#)) For example, a student may perform at the Novice-High level in reading and the Intermediate-Low level in speaking.

- Cultural content recurs across the modes of communication because communication always occurs within a cultural context. The 21st-century themes identified in the *Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Framework* are incorporated in many of these content statements. Students spiral through this content with increasing depth and sophistication as they attain higher levels of language proficiency. Therefore, the extent to which a theme is addressed at a given point in time depends on age- and developmental appropriateness as well as on proficiency level.
- Integration of technology within the CPIs necessitates its use as a tool in instruction and assessment.

### ***One World Languages Standard***

The reorganization of the previous world languages standards into one revised standard reflects the framework, graphically depicted below, that was developed for the 2004 National Association of Educational Progress (NAEP) in foreign languages.



The NAEP graphic illustrates that the overarching goal of language instruction is the development of students' communicative skills (the central "C" of five Cs in the graphic is for "communication"). Students should be provided ample opportunities to engage in conversations, present information to a known audience, and interpret authentic materials in the language of study. In addition, to develop linguistic proficiency, a meaningful context for language use must be established. The four Cs in the outer ring of the graphic (cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities) provide this meaningful context for language learning. These contexts stress (1) the teaching of culture; (2) the study and reinforcement of content from other disciplines; (3) the comparison of target and native languages and cultures; and (4) opportunities to interact with native speakers of languages. As such, the four context Cs serve as the basis for instructional activities and are fully embedded within the world languages communication objectives.

[View two videos \(#12 and #30\) that illustrate the integration of the five Cs.](#)

### ***Three Strands***

The revised world languages standard continues to include three strands, one for each of the three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational (in the NAEP graphic, these are shown around the inner triangle).

**Strand A** reflects the **Interpretive Mode** of communication, in which students demonstrate understanding of spoken and written communication within appropriate cultural contexts. Examples of this kind of “one-way” reading or listening include cultural interpretations of printed texts, videos, online texts, movies, radio and television broadcasts, and speeches. Beyond the Novice level, “interpretation” differs from “comprehension” because it implies the ability to read or listen “between the lines” and “beyond the lines.” For more on the interpretive mode of communication:

- Click [Teaching Foreign Languages K-12 Workshop](#) to view a video on the interpretive mode (scroll down to video #1).
- Click [Wisconsin Project: Modes of Communication](#).

**Strand B** reflects the **Interpersonal Mode** of communication, in which students engage in direct oral and/or written communication with others. Examples of this “two-way” communication include conversing face-to-face, participating in online discussions or videoconferences, instant messaging and text messaging, and exchanging personal letters or e-mail messages. For more on the interpersonal mode of communication:

- Click [Teaching Foreign Languages K-12 Workshop](#) to view a video on the interpersonal mode (scroll down to video #2).
- Click [Wisconsin Project: Modes of Communication](#).

**Strand C** reflects the **Presentational Mode** of communication, in which students present, orally and/or in writing, information, concepts and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers with whom there is no immediate interaction. Examples of this “one-to-many” mode of communication include a presentation to a group, posting an online video or webpage, creating and posting a podcast or videocast, and writing an article for a newspaper.

- Click [Teaching Foreign Languages K-12 Workshop](#) to view a video on the presentational mode (scroll down to video #3)
- Click [Wisconsin Project: Modes of Communication](#).

### ***The Role of Grammar in the World Languages Class***

While knowledge of the grammar of a language (e.g., rules for syntax, tense, and other elements of usage) is not an explicit goal of the revised New Jersey World Languages standard, grammar plays a supporting role in allowing students to achieve the stated linguistic proficiency goals. Grammar is one tool that supports the attainment of the stated linguistic goals; others tools include knowledge of vocabulary, sociolinguistic knowledge, understanding of cultural appropriateness, and grasp of communication strategies.

Students who are provided with ample opportunities to create meaning and use critical thinking skills in a language of study achieve linguistic proficiency. Research has established that all grammar learning must take place within a meaningful context, with the focus on producing structures to support communication.

### **Education in World Languages: Advocacy and Resources**

- Information regarding federal grants for implementing standards-based world languages programs may be found on the Foreign Language Assistance Program ([FLAP](#)) or the Joint National Committee for Languages ([JNCL](#)) websites. JNCL also provides advocacy materials.
- The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages ([ACTFL](#)) provides extensive research related to the ways that language learning benefits students by supporting academic achievement, cognitive development, and positive attitudes and beliefs about languages and cultures.
- An [Annotated Glossary With Resources](#), instructions for [How To Select Culturally Authentic Materials Based On Proficiency Level](#), and a [World Languages Performance-Level Descriptors Table](#) were designed in connection with the World Languages standard to support implementation of world languages instruction.
- The most comprehensive report compiled on the status of world languages education in New Jersey's public schools (2005), *A Report on the State of World Languages Implementation in New Jersey*, is available on the [New Jersey Department of Education World Languages](#) homepage.
- The state language organization—[Foreign Language Educators of New Jersey \(FLENJ\)](#)—offers links to a variety of language resources, professional development opportunities, and information about student and professional awards and scholarships.

## References

- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. (1998). *ACTFL performance guidelines for K-12 learners*. Yonkers, NY: Author.
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. (1999). *ACTFL proficiency guidelines—speaking*. Retrieved January 8, 2009, from <http://www.actfl.org/files/public/Guidelinespeak.pdf>
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. (1999). *ACTFL proficiency guidelines—writing*. Retrieved January 8, 2009, from <http://www.actfl.org/files/public/writingguidelines.pdf>
- Asia Society. (2008). *Putting the world into world-class education: State innovations and opportunities*. Retrieved July 20, 2009, from <http://www.asiasociety.org/files/stateinnovations.pdf>
- Falsgraf, C. (Ed.). (2007). *Foreign language units for all proficiency levels*. Washington, DC: International Society for Technology in Education.
- Jensen, J., Sandrock, P., & Franklin, J. (2007). *The essentials of world languages, grades K-12: Effective curriculum, instruction and assessment: Priorities in practice*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Lightbown, P., & Spada, N. (2006). *How languages are learned*. Oxford, England: Oxford Press.
- Met, M. (2001). Why language learning matters. *Educational Leadership*, 59(2), 36-40.
- National Assessment Governing Board. (2000). *Framework for the 2004 foreign language National Assessment of Educational Progress*. Washington, DC: Author. Online: <http://www.nagb.org/publications/frameworks/FinalFrameworkPrePubEdition1.pdf>

- National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project. (2006). *Standards for foreign language learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. Lawrence, KS: Allen Press, Inc.
- New Jersey State Department of Education. (1999). *New Jersey world languages curriculum framework*. Trenton, NJ: Author.
- New Jersey State Department of Education. (2004). *Core curriculum content standards*. Trenton, NJ: Author.
- New Jersey State Department of Education. (2005). *A report on the state of world languages implementation in New Jersey*. Trenton, NJ: Author. Online: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/aps/cccs/wl/stateofwl.pdf>
- New Jersey State Department of Education & Center for Applied Second Language Studies. (2008). *Policy, assessment, and professional development: Results from a statewide study*. Trenton, NJ: Author. Online: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/aps/cccs/wl/g8assess/njflap2.htm>
- Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills. (2005). *Framework for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning*. Online: <http://www.21stcenturyskills.org>
- Wong, W., & Van Patten, B. (2003). The evidence is in, drills are out. *Foreign Language Annals*, 36(3), 403-423.